

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0698
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USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 3667

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, GT
SUBJ: TERRORIST THREAT AGAINST AMBASSADORS IN GUATEMALA

REF: GUATEMALA 3622 (NOTAL)

1. AT PRESIDENT LAUGERUD'S REQUEST, ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER
AYCINENA CONVOKED URGENT MEETING OF CHIEFS OF MISSION AT
FOREIGN MINISTRY JUNE 21 TO ADVISE THEM OF EXISTENCE OF SPECIAL
THREAT TO CHIEFS OF MISSION AND TO OFFER SPECIAL PROTECTION.

2. AYCINENA RECALLED UNFORTUNATE HISTORY OF TERRORISM IN GUATE-
MALA, MENTIONING ASSASSINATIONS OF AMBASSADOR MEIN, GERMAN
AMBASSADOR AND U.S. MILITARY OFFICERS, AND NOTED THAT SUCH
TERRORISM WHICH HAD BEGUN HERE HAD BECOME WIDESPREAD PHENOMENA.
HE SAID GOVERNMENT NOW HAD INFORMATION THAT IN ORDER TO LAUNCH
CAMPAIGN OF SUBVERSION IN SPECTACULAR WAY TERRORIST ELEMENTS
WOULD ATTEMPT TO KIDNAP THREE AMBASSADORS ACCREDITED HERE,
NOT IDENTIFIED. (THIS IS PROBABLY REFERENCE TO REPORTED THREAT
AGAINST ISRAELI, NICARAGUAN AND U.S. AMBASSADORS, ORIGINALLY
CONVEYED TO US BY GOG AS ASSASSINATION THREAT.) FOR THIS
REASON GOVERNMENT WAS URGING AMBASSADORS TO EXERCISE SPECIAL
PRECAUTIONS AND WAS OFFERING SPECIAL PROTECTION AS OF TODAY TO
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ANY AMBASSADOR WISHING IT, SUCH PROTECTION TO CONSIST OF THREE
SPECIAL DETECTIVES WHO WOULD ACCOMPANY AMBASSADORS IN FOLLOW
CARS. AYCINENA ADVISED THAT REPRESENTATIVE OF GENERAL
CANCINOS, ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH EMBASSIES
TODAY TO ARRANGE DETAILS. THIS PROTECTION WOULD BE EXTENDED
INDEFINITELY.

3. DURING QUESTION PERIOD, COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR PROPOSED THAT DIPLOMATIC CORPS MAKE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THEIR GOVERNMENTS WOULD NOT PAY RANSOM FOR ANY AMBASSADOR HERE WHO MIGHT BE KIDNAPPED, SUGGESTING THIS WOULD BE USEFUL PSYCHOLOGICAL MEASURE AGAINST THE TERRORISTS. THERE WAS NO ENTHUSIASM FOR THIS IDEA, AND AYCINENA SUGGESTED IT BE PURSUED, IF AT ALL, WITHIN THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS.

4. PRESIDENT LAUGERUD WENT PUBLIC WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S CONCERNS YESTERDAY WHILE INAUGURATING A HOSPITAL IN PUERTO BARRIOS. IN CONVERSATION WITH PRESS, AS REPORTED PIECEMEAL IN JUNE 21 EL GRAFICO AND EL IMPACTO, LAUGERUD REVEALED EXISTENCE OF PLAN TO ASSASSINATE DEFENSE MINISTER SPIEGELER AND OTHER ARMY OFFICERS AND "KIDNAP THREE OR FOUR AMBASSADORS." HE ADDED THAT ANONYMOUS CONSPIRATORS ("WE KNOW WHO THEY ARE") SOUGHT TO PROVOKE ARMY, WHICH WAS NOT SO CHILDISH AS TO PERMIT THEM TO ACHIEVE THEIR OBJECT. PRESIDENT WARNED THAT IF TERRORIST ACTIONS THREATEN UPCOMING INAUGURATION CEREMONIES, HE WOULD IF NECESSARY TAKE DISTASTEFUL STEP OF INVOKING STATE OF SIEGE FOR FIRST TIME IN HIS ADMINISTRATION.
BOSTER

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